



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Board of Selectmen minutes, 02/10/2002

TOWN OF ARLINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 10, 7:15 p.m.

Present: Mrs. Dias, Chair, Mr. Hurd, Vice Chair, Mrs. Mahon, Mr. Greeley, Mr. Lyons
 Also Present: Mrs. Galkowski, Mr. Maher, Mrs. Krepelka.

1. CDBG Status Report

Alan McClennen, Director, Planning and Community Development

Mr. Kevin O'Brien, Assistant Town Planner, presented the CDBG Status for Mr. McClennen who was absent due to his mother's death. The use of CDBG funds is strictly constrained by federal regulation and in general cannot be used to take over functions that are normally part of the Town Budget. Funds are intended for the economically disadvantaged for housing, public services, public facilities and improvements, and planning. Proposals for next year CDBG funds must be made by March 3, 2003. Determination of the expenditures is made by the Board of Selectmen in consultation with the Town Manager.

- Mr. Hurd asked that Town Planner Alan McClennen come back with an answer on whether the Board could put some money up this year (\$20,000) for design to start the Waldo Park.
- Mr. Lyons reminded the Board to be vigilant about emphasizing affordable housing for low and moderate income people.
- Mrs. Mahon proposed using some funds towards residential housing for autistic/spectrum children, and the implementation of a thermo-plastic program. She would like Mr. McClennen to get clarity on whether this issue falls within the CDBG program. If so to get started using funds around Town Hall and schools.
- Mr. Greeley agreed on usage for affordable housing.

7:30 p.m.

Meeting with Finance Committee – Selectmen's Hearing Room

Acting Town Manager Mrs. Galkowski presented a report explaining the increase in the deficit from last year's Town Meeting of \$8.2 million to this years projected \$13.1 million and offered \$2.9 million in reductions as a start to covering the difference. Collectively, there is an increase in the deficit of \$5 million more than expected last fall.

Mr. Fosskett, member of the Capital Planning Committee, suggests that if the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and School Committee only focuses on a \$13.1 million deficit that Arlington will be back year after year discussing a deficit problem. The Town needs to deal with a correction of about \$16.8 million to have financial stability for 3 years.

That would be by: 1) increase taxes, 2) expense reductions, or 3) do both.

Mr. Tosti of the Finance Committee asked for guidance from the Board on the budget

approach to go to Town Meeting. All money has been based on the O'Neill Formula established in the 1980s.

Mrs. Donovan, Superintendent of Schools, reported that the schools reduced the budget about 10%, but the School Committee has not yet approved it. This will not allow the schools to teach the children at the same level as in past years. There is a need for an override and to look at budget busters such as special education. Mr. Lyons appreciated the presentation and suggested 1) cut spending by \$915,000 and 2) form a task force to look at three major budget busters (health costs, residential private placement and state aid).

Mr. Hurd wants the Town to demonstrate fiscal responsibility before going to the public with an override.

Mr. Greeley will support an override if there is a three- year fiscal plan and everyone is united on plan.

Mrs. Dias asked Mrs. Galkowski and Mrs. Donovan to give a report to the Board in two weeks with cuts that would reach \$915,000.

Mr. Lyons moved approval for the Chair of Board of Selectmen, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Chair of the School Committee to form a task force to look at:

- residential private placement
- health insurance
- state aid
- pensions
- the use of reserves.

All Selectmen approved unanimously.

8:30 p.m.

Discussion and Public Participation on Budget

Everyone who came to speak during the public participation was heard.

-Annie La Court asked the Board to give a figure by 3/1/03 so she can start working on an override.

-Ann Bausman wants an override.

-Rich Marquis (President of Local 1297 Firefighters) asked the Board to support a 15-man minimum in order not to jeopardize town safety.

-Harry McCabe, a member of Council on Aging, has been asked to cut its budget by 60.2%, which makes it impossible to maintain a council. He'd like it to be more like 19% using the O'Neal formula and would support an override.

-Robin Schoenthaler asks the Board to bravely look at cuts and minimize cuts to direct services. Be open to anything and look at what other Towns are doing. After the cuts, be realistic and brave--go for an override, give people a number by 3/1/03.

-Rhonda Feinbaum supports an override but would like school cuts to be less.

-James Smith (Police Department) asked the Board to not cut the force by 5 patrolmen and 1 sergeant in order to fulfill the public safety role.

-Sharon Wilke wants an override to help the educational needs of the children.

-Patricia Deal, Trustee, Robbins Library reported that the proposed cuts would change nature of the Library as a resource: The proposed cuts are as follows:

Cut 16.5 positions (equal to 7 full timers)

Close Fox Library

Deep cuts in materials i.e. magazines etc.

Change in hours with the library closed 2 mornings and 2 nights and weekends. This will also close the resource meeting rooms for meetings.

-Lynette Culverhouse says to increase taxes will change the diversity of our Town.

We need to raise money with an open, creative mind using new ideas.

-Nora Mann is upset about cuts. She suggests direct service cuts will cause a ripple effect; look at small things, example, travel, stipends. We all need to make sacrifices, look at management and policies, and start working on an override.

- Jennifer Potter asked Board to make quick decisions as a town and community.
- Cindy Friedman wants the Board to look at everything. It is not just a school problem, the cuts are disproportionate. The cuts are deepest for school and youth services hurting the kids the most. The Town needs an override.
- Lt.-John Serson, Police department, asks for maintenance of funding for the Police Department. He feels we need this to maintain a good business community, safe schools, and public safety for residents.
- Nancy Gabriel asks the Board to not close the Fox Library because it is an important resource for East Arlington. Would help in fund-raising to keep it open.
- Mrs. Dias thanked all public participants and stated we will have more meetings in the future. There will be painful cuts and thanks everyone for standing together as a community.

9:45 p.m.

Board reconvened in Selectmen's Chambers.

Selectmen comments on the budget discussion:

Mr. Lyons wants the Town Manager and Fire and Police Chiefs to look at the following proposals to see if they make sense and report back to the Board. He thinks his suggestions will get to the same bottom line but will hurt fewer people.

Fire Department:

- Stay at a 15 man minimum
- Cut 1 Deputy Chief
- Cut 1 Captain
- Reassign training and fire protection officer
- He believes that Homeland Security funding money will give additional resource money.

Police Department:

- Eliminate 3 Captain positions, replace with 1 Deputy Chief
- Cut an additional Lieutenant
- Reduce patrolman positions only by 2
- He believes in effect a greater savings is a good opportunity to reorganize the Police Department.

Mrs. Dias thinks there should be philosophical decisions made looking at management and supervisory personnel and direct services to the Town. Guidance should be given to the Acting Town Manager for budget cuts such as; policies on gas allowances, automobiles, cell phones in order to save jobs and direct services.

Mr. Hurd would like to see the effects of Mr. Lyons suggestions. At first focus on open positions, but he wants to look at all positions. It may not be right to just go with cutting the open positions. Look at reorganizations, supervisory positions, etc. He is in support of the 15-man minimum for the Fire Department.

Mr. Greeley asked not to exempt Assistant Town Manager from hiring freeze.

Mrs. Mahon asked to look at the following:

- Are 2 Personnel Managers justifiable?
- Are 2 Attorneys justifiable? Maybe a consultant.
- CDBG funding --can half the grants be used for example Personnel?
- She supports a 15 man minimum in the Fire Department
- Look at vehicle purchases and out-of-state travel.

LICENSES & PERMITS

2. Request for One Day All Alcoholic License

Retired Men's Club, 3/23/03

Mr. Greeley moved approval.

(4-0) SO VOTED

APPOINTMENT3. **Cable Advisory Board**

Nancy Ortwein

(term to expire 2/06)

Mr. Hurd moved approval.

(4-0) SO VOTED

REAPPOINTMENTS4. **Conservation Commission**

Tim Sullivan

(term to expire 10/21/05)

Mr. Greeley moved approval.

(4-0) SO VOTED

Cemetery Commission

Ed Murphy

(term to expire 12/22/05)

Mr. Greeley moved approval.

(4-0) SO VOTED

Board of Youth Services

Jack Bowler

(term to expire 1/27/06)

Mr. Hurd moved approval.

(4-0) SO VOTED

Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum Board of Trustees

James McGough

(term to expire 2/06)

Mrs. Mahon moved approval.

(4-0) SO VOTED

Prior to voting on the above, Mr. Lyons exited the room for a brief period.

5. **CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM**

No matter presented for consideration of the Board.

TRAFFIC RULES & ORDERS/OTHER BUSINESS6. **For Approval: Payment of Bills**

Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum

Mr. Greeley moved approval.

(4-0) SO VOTED

Selectmen Warrant Articles

John Maher spoke concerning the need for all five Selectmen to vote on

the warrant articles.. He also suggests inserting a warrant

to change the bylaws regarding the mailing out of state/federal elections. We are only required by law to post elections and this would save the Town money.

Mrs. Mahon also suggested inserting a warrant to increase fee for overnight parking during snow times for safety of plowing. Mr. Maher told Mrs. Mahon that it needs to be approved only by the Board and the Selectmen could amend the Traffic Rules and Orders. Mrs. Galkowski will talk to the Police Chief and report back to the Board.

Mrs. Dias suggests there be public outreach on how a snow emergency is declared to go along with the plowing and parking. Mr. Hurd and Mrs. Mahon would look over all rate fees.

Mr. Hurd moved approval.

(5-0) SO VOTED

8. **Request for New Member of Conservation Commission**

Cori Beckwith, Administrator

Mr. Lyons moved approval and asked the Board Administrator to advertise for a new Commissioner in the Arlington Advocate. (5-0) SO VOTED

9. Request for Special Town Meeting – May 5, 2003

David Walkinshaw, Symmes Advisory Committee

Mr. Maher reported there is an enormous amount of work to go over thus making the need for a special town meeting.

Mr. Lyons moved approval. (5-0) SO VOTED

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Greeley does not favor doing away with residency requirement but does favor doing away with the 3 years Town Manager requirement. This discussion will come up under warrant article at Town Meeting. Mr. Greeley asked that Ms. Cove, Personnel Director, make a preliminary schedule by March meeting of the process for a new Town Manager.

Mr. Lyons would like Mrs. Mahon and himself to be on a sub-committee looking at what changes would have to be made to have a 0% increase this year in health care.

Mr. Hurd asked Mrs. Dias to have five sub-committees appointed by Thursday as follows:

Special Education – Out of district student placement

State aid

Health insurance

Budget revenue

Pensions

Mr. Maher proposed figuring out a better way of holding Town Meeting with possible Saturdays. He suggests inviting the Town Moderator to a future meeting for a discussion.

Mr. Hurd thanked all Selectmen who were able to come to his kick off event for re-election.

Executive Session

Mrs. Dias moved to convene in executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with non-union personnel, and that the Board reconvene in open session for the sole purpose of adjournment.

On Mrs. Dias motion:

Mr. Lyons: yes

Mr. Hurd: yes

Mrs. Dias: yes

Mrs. Mahon: yes

Mr. Greeley: yes

Mr. Lyons moved to adjourn executive session at 11:45 p.m.

A true record: Attest:

Marie A. Krepelka
Board Administrator

